

Montana Working To Protect The Rights Of Montanans
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EXHIBIT 11
DATE 2.13.07
HB 439

February 7, 2006

HB 439

Dear Representative,

We attended the hearing on HB 439 regarding the licensing of ponds in Montana. We were not prepared to speak at the hearing, but have had an opportunity to evaluate this bill and would like to offer the following input. This bill moves us in a direction that recognizes the constitutional right to enjoy liberty and property here in Montana.

These ponds are all on private property and provide many benefits to many species of wildlife here in Montana.

One of the opponents miserably tried to claim that these ponds are a direct violation of water rights by consumption. I am not a fisheries biologist, but the last time I checked, I do not know of any studies that document the amount of water a fish drinks. I would have to venture that this factor in water consumption would be rather low. The other side of this opposition is also clear in that FWP refuses to relinquish any authority.

As disease is a legitimate concern, there is no concrete evidence presented that can link private ponds to wild fisheries. The same "Sky is falling" tactic was used in Elk farming. This tactic infringed upon private property rights, free enterprise and had major negative economic impacts to communities here in Montana. We must not repeat this hysterical practice of private property rights management.

Therefore we urge this committee to pass this bill on in the name of the constitution and private property rights here in Montana.

Timothy L. Ravndal

Timothy L. Ravndal, President